

**KRISHNA WINSTON  
655 BOW LANE  
MIDDLETOWN CT 06457**

**Testimony in Support of HB 6664 An Act Managing Waste and Creating a Waste Authority**

February 22, 2023

Dear Honored Co-Chairs, Sen. Lopes and Rep. Gresko; Vice Chairs, Sen. Hochadel and Rep. Palm; Ranking Members, Sen. Harding and Rep. Callahan; and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee:

As the chair of Middletown's Resource Recycling Advisory Commission since 1991 and a regular participant in DEEP's Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management, I strongly support HB 6664, which will move Connecticut toward responsible management of packaging and printed paper through adoption of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

Since recycling became mandatory in Connecticut, I have witnessed its increasing inability to meaningfully reduce the weight, volume, and make-up of the waste stream. This failure stems primarily from the enormous increase in packaging, especially types made of plastic or plastic bonded to other materials, and the proliferation of single-use plastic items. At present only a very small percentage of plastic is recycled or, in fact, readily recyclable in the U.S. For instance, we have learned only recently that the ubiquitous black plastic containers used for take-out and for groceries such as mushrooms cannot be recycled.

Last summer's closing of the MIRA incinerator in Hartford has brought the state's waste crisis into sharp relief, but the crisis has been long in the making. Incineration, which produces toxic gases, particulates, and ash that often afflict already vulnerable environmental-justice communities, was never an ideal solution, and landfilling produces toxic leachate and methane (a greenhouse gas more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>) and gobbles up open space. Middletown's sanitation district now ships its trash to landfills in Ohio and Pennsylvania, merely exporting these problems and incurring additional transportation costs, both monetary and environmental.

We need to drastically reduce the waste that we see spilling out of residential trash carts and dumpsters, littering roadsides, floating in bodies of water, and being ingested by birds, fish, and other wildlife. Connecticut is making progress on diverting food waste and other organics, which can be composted or converted into biofuel. Textiles, metal, and construction debris can be collected and reused. Existing state-wide EPR programs that your committee has supported — for paint, electronics, mattresses, mercury thermometers, and gas cylinders (coming soon)— have successfully shifted financial and environmental burdens from consumers and

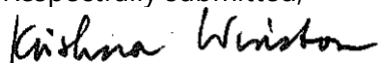
municipalities to producers. Your recent support of the expanded bottle bill has great potential to increase reuse and recycling of glass and plastic beverage containers.

EPR for packaging succeeds in other parts of the world, including in Canada, just to our north. Maine, Oregon, California, and Colorado have adopted packaging EPR, and in nineteen other states it is under consideration. Connecticut now has an opportunity to join those pioneers in setting an example for the rest of the country. The more states implement this EPR, the more effective it will be in influencing packaging practices.

The non-profit Product Stewardship Organization and the stakeholder advisory body that HB 6664 creates will provide powerful incentives for the manufacturers and users of packaging to reduce the overall quantity and adopt more readily recyclable, compostable, and reusable materials. The legislation will also further consumer education on waste reduction. Any added cost to consumers will be negligible and the savings on disposal, currently borne by taxpayers, subscribers, and municipalities, substantial. While you will hear from haulers that EPR for packaging and printed paper will destroy their business, that argument should not sway you; the materials collected will still have to be transported, and if quantities *are* smaller, it is up to the market, not to you, to adjust.

The time has come for our society to stop using up resources to create materials that end up being burned, buried, or littered. I urge you to do your utmost to move this legislation forward and to convince your fellow legislators of its crucial importance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krishna Winston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krishna Winston